



Reading the Holocaust

Inga Clendinnen

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The events of the Holocaust remain unthinkable to many men and women, as morally and intellectually baffling today as they were a half century ago. Inga Clendinnen seeks to dispel what she calls the "Gorgon effect:" the sickening of imagination and the draining of the will that afflict so many of us when we try to confront the horrors of this history. Clendinnen explores the experience of the Holocaust from both the victims' and the perpetrators' points of view. She discusses the remarkable survivor testimonies of writers such as Primo Levi and Charlotte Delbo, the vexing issue of "resistance" in the camps, and survivors' strategies for understanding the motivations of the Nazi leadership. She focuses an anthropologist's precise gaze on the actions of the murderers in the police battalions and among the SS in the camps. Finally she considers how the Holocaust has been portrayed in poetry, fiction, and film. Searching and eloquent, *Reading the Holocaust* is an uncompromising attempt to extract the comprehensible--the recognizably human--from the unthinkable inhuman acts of the Holocaust. Inga Clendinnen is the author of *Ambivalent Conquests: Maya and Spaniard in Yucatan, 1517-1570* and *Aztecs: An Interpretation*, both published by Cambridge University Press.

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